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### **Forging Partnerships to Make L.A. County a World Leader in Bioscience**

Seeking to unlock Los Angeles County's potential to become a world leader in bioscience research and development, the Board of Supervisors approved a motion to forge partnerships with academic institutions and scout for land that could be developed into innovation hubs.

"What Silicon Valley created for computer technology, the County can create for biotechnology," Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas said in his motion, which won unanimous approval. He envisioned "an innovative, thriving environment encompassing academic institutions, training centers and companies with the support of local communities."

Board Chair Hilda Solis, who coauthored the motion, said, "With cutting-edge bioscience promising an infusion of investment and discovery, and with the Affordable Care Act more deeply rooting us in our need to offer quality medical care, it is now more important than ever to prioritize how we use our public land to support the creation of more bioscience jobs and research."

Bioscience includes research on genes, organisms, agriculture and food processing. It can lead to innovations that cure disease, reduce world hunger, and clean the environment. Biotechnology is the fusion of bioscience and technology.

In 2014, a Battelle Memorial Institute report recommended establishing three to five innovation hubs within County-owned medical campuses, in collaboration with academic institutions and private companies. The Board, which commissioned the report, tapped the Los Angeles Economic Development Corporation (LAEDC) to craft an implementation plan.

In their motion, Supervisors Ridley-Thomas and Solis noted universities in the County produce more than 5,000 science, technology and engineering graduates every year – more than San Francisco and San Diego combined. However, the County ranks only 14<sup>th</sup> in the nation in biotechnology investment, while San Francisco and San Diego are in first and third place, respectively.

“The goal is to reverse this trend, and to make LA County synonymous with being a bioscience world leader – nothing short of that,” Supervisor Ridley-Thomas said.

He added, “The benefits will come in the form of a more diversified and local economy, higher paying jobs for County residents, and more tax revenues that can be used to address the critical issues that face the County today, such as homelessness and lack of affordable housing.”

The motion [directed the County’s Chief Executive Officer to provide LAEDC with information](#) on the County’s real estate assets, particularly those within or adjacent to medical campuses such as LAC+USC Healthcare Network in Boyle Heights and Martin Luther King, Jr. Medical Campus in Willowbrook. They [also directed the Community Development Commission to launch community outreach efforts.](#)

Several representatives of academic institutions testified before the Board in support of the motion.

“This is a very exciting time in the bioscience/biotechnology realm, particularly for Los Angeles,” said Dr. David Carlisle, president and CEO of Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science in Willowbrook. “From a big picture standpoint, technological advances are likely to transform healthcare outcomes and health in general in the coming decades.”

Dr. Laura Cantu, representing East Los Angeles College, added, “We have a commitment in creating new biotech training programs to support the industry that’s moving in, but more importantly continuing the commitment to train our community members to be prepared to step into employment opportunities that will be created by the bioscience industry moving into the area.”

LA BioMed's Dr. Ruben Flores, USC's David Galaviz, CalState LA's Peter Hong and Zuhey Espinoza, LabLaunch's Llewellyn Cox, Logan Research's Suave Lobodzinski, BioTech Connection LA's Cecilia Estolano and also testified.

Los Angeles is already looking at creating its first biotech hub at the campus of the Harbor-UCLA Medical Center, next to LA BioMed Research Center, which recently announced plans to open a [Pulmonary and Cardiac Rehabilitation Program](#) to serve patients in South LA and the South Bay. The 8-12 week program includes walking, cycling and strength exercises, as well as nutrition education, counseling, and more – all of which can decrease emergency room visits, hospitalizations and readmissions, reducing healthcare costs considerably.

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